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THE RECORD OF ENTOMOLOGY for the year 1870 will be soon issued, and it is hoped that subscribers to the previous parts will feel inclined to support this undertaking another year.

SYNOPSIS OF EUROPEAN COLEOPTERA DESCRIBED IN 1868.*—This is a most convenient work for European coleopterists, and is of considerable value to American entomologists. Each species, described as new, is briefly characterized in Latin, so that entomologists of every nationality can read it. When will the time come for the publication of a similar yearly synopsis in America for all the insects?

NATURAL HISTORY MISCELLANY.

BOTANY.

THE JARDIN DES PLANTES, PARIS: *Feb.* 20.—To-day we drove round to the house of M. Decaisne, whose celebrity as a botanist is too well known for any further comment to be necessary, and under his kind and most interesting guidance I visited a scene which was full of painful interest. The gardens had apparently been a point of especial bombardment, and no fewer than eighty-three shells had fallen within their comparatively limited area. We went out to the glass-houses to judge for ourselves of the effects. On the nights of January 8th and 9th, four shells fell into the glass-houses and shattered the greater part of them into atoms. A heap of glass fragments, lying hard by, testified to the destruction, but the effect of the shells was actually to pulverize the glass, so that it fell almost like dust over the gardens. The consequence was that nearly the whole of this most rare and valuable collection was exposed to one of the coldest nights of the year, and whole families of plants were killed by the frost. Some of the plants suffered the most singular effects from the concussion; the fibres were stripped bare, and the bark peeled off in many instances. One house into which we went presented a most lamentable appearance of bare poles; scarcely a leaf was left.

* Synopsis Coleopterorum Europæ et Confinium, anno 1868, descriptorum. Auctore, G. R. Crotch, M. A. London: Williams & Norgate, 1870. 8vo. pp. 68.

All the Orchids, all the Clusiaceæ, the Cyclantheæ, the Pandaneæ, were completely destroyed, either by the shells themselves or by the effects of the cold. The large Palm-house was destroyed, and the tender tropical contents were exposed to that bitter cold night; yet, singularly enough, although they have suffered severely, not one has yet died. Imagine Kew Gardens under a heavy fire, and Dr. Hooker standing disconsolate in the midst of them, his most cherished plants in ribands, and his glass-houses a mass of powder, and we can form some idea of what M. Decaisne suffered during those fifteen nights, when shells came bursting under his windows, sending splinters into his flower garden and shaking his house to its foundations with every explosion. Feeling that, at all costs, he was bound to stick to his post, he passed the whole of his time actively engaged in covering up his plants in blankets, and straining every nerve to keep the cherished favorites of a lifetime from the ruthless missiles that were searching every nook and corner of the establishment. Two shells fell into the zoological gallery, one into the gallery of mineralogy, where it destroyed some beautiful pieces of palæontology. Three fell into the laboratories and museum, destroying a valuable collection of rare shells, which had just been classified. The houses, historical as having been the residences of Cuvier and Buffon, did not escape, but fortunately, although several of the shells were found to be full of combustible material, nothing was set on fire. All through the whole of the fortnight during which these gardens were subjected to this rain of shells, Messrs. Decaisne, Chevreuil, and Milne-Edwards remained at their post, unable to rest, and have since, at their own expense, repaired the damage done, trusting that, whatever form of government France may choose, it will not repudiate its debt of honor. The British public have nobly come forward to relieve the distress of the suffering population of Paris; I would now make an appeal to the comparatively small section of society whose glass-houses may perhaps be supplied with plants which may replace those which have been destroyed. M. Decaisne is making out a list of his losses, a large proportion of which might possibly be supplied from Kew, while owners of private collections might also be glad to testify their sympathy and interest in the cause of science by contributing whatever they may be able to spare as soon as the amount and nature of the loss is ascertained. I feel no doubt that it will be enough to make the facts known for

the British public to respond with the same generosity which they have manifested in other instances. The animals fared better than the plants — not only have none of them been eaten by the population of Paris, as the latter fondly suppose, but, although several shells burst among them, they have escaped uninjured. Of course, when food was so scarce for human beings, the monkeys and their companions were put upon short allowance. This fact, coupled with the extreme rigor of the season, increased the rate of mortality among them, and one elephant died, but was not eaten. The two elephants and the camel, that were eaten, belonged to the Jardin d'Acclimation, and had been removed in the early stage of the siege from their ordinary home in the Bois Boulogne, for safety, to the Jardin des Plantes, where, however, it would appear, it was not to be found. The birds screamed and the animals cowered, as the shells came rushing overhead and bursting near them, as they do when some terrific storm frightens them; latterly, they seemed to become used to it; fortunately, the part of the garden which they inhabit is somewhat removed from the museums, at which the fire seemed more especially directed. The gates of this favorite resort were kept closed, because the price of firewood is so high, and the scarcity of it such, that the people are unable to resist the temptation of coming into the gardens in search of fuel, and, for the present, it is found wise to shut them out; indeed, so much greater is the necessity for fuel than for food at present, that the provision trains have been stopped by order of the Government to allow the coal trains to pass. — *Special Correspondent of "The Times," quoted in the "Gardeners' Chronicle."*

ASCENT OF THE SAP IN PINES. — Some years ago, my gardener pointed out to me that some Austrian and Scotch Pines, which had been completely girdled by mice, still continued to grow, as if no such injury had been received. In order to test this matter, I took an Austrian Pine about five feet high, and girdled it for a space of two inches, at about three feet from the ground. This was five years ago, and the upper portion is still alive. The tree attracts much attention from visitors to my grounds. When girdled, the branch was about one and one-half inches in diameter. The whole portion of stem between the tier of branches above, and that below — a space of about fifteen inches — has since remained of that size, and is dry and hard as a "pine knot." The

parts above and below this dead space increase annually in girth. The upper portion is now about nine inches in circumference. There are branches above and below the girdled portion; the lower ones growing much the stronger. The upper portion makes only two or three inches of growth a year, and the "needles" are of a brighter green than the lower. — THOMAS MEEHAN.

DIMORPHISM IN DEUTZIA. — My friend, Edward Tatnall, of Wilmington, Del., once called my attention to the fact that there appeared to be two kinds of flowers on the *Deutzia gracilis*, a dwarf shrub now common in gardens. I have a plant now in flower by forcing in a greenhouse. One class of flowers is of normal form, with well developed pistils, and the ten stamens with their somewhat petaloid filaments. The other class has the pistils scarcely developed; the anthers seem quite as large and as perfect as in the others, but are quite destitute of filaments. I cannot tell with certainty whether this is an arrangement for cross-fertilization of separate flowers, because the anthers in the hermaphrodite flowers, as we suppose them to be, appear perfect; but when the season comes for observing the flowers in the open ground, May or June, no doubt the facts could be definitely ascertained. I make note of these little things now, so that botanical students can observe for themselves when the time comes round. — THOMAS MEEHAN.

CONTRIVANCE IN THE COROLLA OF SALVIA INVOLUCRATA. — In most *Salvias*, part of the anther develops into a lever which closes the throat, and, when lifted by an insect, causes the pollen to be thrown on its back. Some suppose, and with apparent good reason, that this is to aid in cross-fertilization. In *Salvia involucrata*, the lever arrangements are remarkably well developed, but the arched upper lip curves inward, and prevents the anthers from acting in the manner above described. It would seem as if the plant, after "making" its arrangements for cross-fertilization, "repented," and "made" another to contradict it. — THOMAS MEEHAN.

ALBINO FLOWERS. — During the summer of 1869 I observed, in the University campus, quite a number of specimens of *Trifolium pratense*, with perfectly white flowers. During the past season, although I searched diligently, I was not able to find any white flowers of that species, not even upon stalks which I believe to

have sprung from the same roots that bore the white flowers observed the year previous, they having apparently resumed their specific color.

During the autumn of 1868 I discovered in Northern Iowa a specimen of *Liatris cylindrica* with perfectly white flowers, all the flowers upon the three stalks from the same root being white. This seems more remarkable than that of the white clover mentioned, because the usual color of the latter is at best only specific, while rose-red is regarded as the invariable color of all the species of *Liatris*. In other words, the color is a generic character. — C. A. WHITE.

[We print this notice, with the remark, once for all, that occasional white flowers may be expected in any species, so that it is hardly worth while to specify numerous particular instances.—Eds.]

ZOOLOGY.

POISON OF THE COBRA. — At the meeting of the Boston Society of Natural History, January 18th, Mr. George Sceva gave the results of an experiment which he had recently made in connection with Dr. Thomas Dwight, Jr., with the poison of the Cobra di Capello, *Naja tripudians*.

January 8th, one quarter of a grain of the dried poison, which had been kept a little more than seven months, was put into twenty drops of water, the poison dissolved, and the liquid reduced by evaporation at a temperature of 85° F., to four drops. This was exposed to the air at a temperature of 22°, and was completely frozen in four minutes, the warmth of the porcelain vessel retarding the process slightly. The poison was allowed to remain in the frozen state for sixteen hours, during which time the temperature fell to 8°, or 24° below the freezing point. On the following day, January 9th, the poison was thawed and diluted with three or four drops of water, and two drops of the liquid injected with a fine-pointed syringe into the pectoral muscle of a pigeon, about half an inch from the keel of the sternum, the point of the syringe penetrating the muscle about one eighth of an inch. This part of the pigeon's body was selected in order to avoid wounding any of the viscera or large blood vessels.